United Nations E/AC.51/2000/6

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
22 May 2000

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Fortieth session
5-30 June 2000
Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Coordination questions: United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

Progress report on the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to a request of the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-ninth session. It shows progress made in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s through the activities undertaken by the organizations of the United Nations system since the last progress report (E/AC.51/1999/6) and addresses the issues of coordination faced in the implementation of the Special Initiative.

The report is based on information received from the following agencies: the Economic Commission for Africa, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the International Labour Organization, the International Maritime Organization, the International Telecommunication Union, the Office of the Special Coordinator for

* E/AC.51/2000/1.

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Africa and the Least Developed Countries of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa secretariat.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in response to a request by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) at its thirty-ninth session, held in June 1999.[1] It focuses on the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa as an implementing arm of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which is the political compact on Africa adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/151 of 18 December 1991.

2. In the progress report on the Special Initiative submitted to CPC at its thirty-ninth session, it was noted that good progress in the implementation of the Special Initiative had been achieved in the areas of governance, information technology for development, education, health, population and gender. The report also indicated that progress was emerging in other areas, including poverty eradication, trade access and opportunities, economic diversification, regional cooperation and integration, water, environment and South-South cooperation (E/AC.51/1999/6, para. 4).

3. Taking note of the progress achieved in the above-mentioned areas and in the area of coordination, CPC called for greater coverage of countries by the Special Initiative and requested that a resource mobilization strategy together with a concrete plan be submitted to it for consideration at its fortieth session. The Committee also recommended the acceleration of the implementation of the Special Initiative.[2]

4. Section II of the present report aims to show the progress achieved in the implementation of the Special Initiative for the period from May 1999 to April 2000 in the same priority areas as those stated in the previous report. Section III addresses the issue of coordination of the Initiative, and section IV contains conclusions. The annexes include a draft resource mobilization strategy note (annex I) and a summary of the recommendations made by the Committee at its thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions, suggested follow-up and actions taken (annex II).

II. Implementation of the Special Initiative since it was last considered by the Committee

A. Overall progress

5. Further progress was recorded in the current reporting period in four areas indicated in the last report: governance, information technology, education, health, and gender and population. Progress has further emerged in areas such as water, poverty eradication and South-South cooperation. In some areas, activities are proceeding, but not necessarily within the Special Initiative framework. Furthermore, in other areas, because of the system of information flow, the lead time required and, more importantly, the lack of agreed benchmarks for measuring progress, the impact of activities being carried out cannot as yet be fully assessed.

B. Governance

1. Capacity-building for governance

6. The Third Africa Governance Forum (Bamako, 28-30 June 1999) like the first and second forums was sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), acting as coordinating agencies, with the financial support of Norway. The first was held in Addis Ababa in July 1997 and the second in Accra in June 1998.

7. At the country level, most of the countries participating in the first and second Forums have established national consultation processes to prepare for the Forum and to follow up its recommendations. At the regional level, UNDP has financially assisted seven countries in submitting project proposals for funding by external partners. UNDP has also supported the preparation of an inventory on governance, as well as funding the African Conference on Public Procurement Reform and a study on public service ethics in Africa.

8. The key issues of the third Forum, which were discussed in plenary and working group sessions, concerned the causes, dynamics and consequences of internal conflict in African societies and the task of preventing and managing conflict through good

governance. These issues can be summarized as the challenge: (a) to understand internal conflict; (b) to re-establish political and social order; and (c) to establish and strengthen good governance structures and processes as a means of preventing and managing conflict. The need for sustained commitment and cooperation in building and strengthening institutional capacity at all levels of governance and at the subregional, regional and global levels in meeting those challenges was consistently emphasized.

9. The Forum also considered the development of conflict indicators and applicable models and how they can benefit policy-making in a proactive rather than a reactive manner. If these indicators are to be incorporated into a normal framework of policy development, it will require strong political will. Conflict indicators can be a very good basis for dialogue between the Government and civil society and between the country and international organizations.

10. With regard to the role of international organizations, two main challenges were brought to the attention of the Forum. First is the need to strengthen coordination among the United Nations agencies that intervene in various stages of conflict. The second is the development of appropriate tools to intervene in conflict situations in a timely and adequate manner, either to halt them or to prevent them from escalating further.

11. ECA has launched a project on monitoring progress towards good governance. The objective of the project is to inform policies and practices that improve governance and thereby foster an environment for increasing investment and economic growth. To this end, the project involves developing a set of indicators for monitoring economic, administrative and political governance and working with national institutions to pilot the application of these indicators in a few African countries.

12. As a part of this project, ECA, in September 1999, with the support of the Ford Foundation, organized a workshop on measuring and monitoring progress in good governance in Africa. The workshop was attended by experts from inside and outside Africa and considered the quantitative and qualitative indicators for monitoring progress towards good governance in African countries. A follow-up workshop was convened by ECA in March 2000 to streamline those indicators and to define the operational modality for the preparation of an ECA pilot study on governance in Africa.

2. Communications for peace-building

13. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the coordinating agency for the implementation of the component of the Special Initiative entitled "peace-building, conflict resolution and national reconciliation: communications for peace-building". UNESCO and the collaborating organizations continue to mobilize potential partners who are not aware of this specific component of the Special Initiative, directly and through the Organization of African Unity (OAU), in order to gain the commitment of African Governments to support and participate in implementing the component. UNESCO has carried out studies on communications and peace-building in Burundi, Ethiopia, Liberia and Mali. National workshops were also organized on the same theme in Ethiopia, Liberia and Mali, during which the findings from the studies were discussed and recommendations were made for formulating national plans of action for using communications for peace-building. The conceptual framework and strategy document on communications for peace-building was published in December 1998.

14. Also during the period, a $1 million project proposal was prepared and submitted for funding to the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships and the United Nations Foundation Inc. The project is designed to promote, through the communication media, conflict prevention, peace-building and the creation of an environment conducive to sustainable development, initially in Burundi, Ethiopia, Liberia and Mali.

15. Because of lack of funds, the development of this component of the Special Initiative has slowed down considerably. However, UNESCO intends to make some progress in its implementation during the second half of 2000 with extrabudgetary funding from the Danish International Development Agency.

C. Information technology for development

16. ECA is the coordinating agency of the information technology for development cluster, for which the implementation modality is the African

Information Society Initiative adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic and social planning in May 1996.

17. The primary activity in this area in 1999 and 2000 was the convening of the first African Development Forum, entitled "the challenge to Africa of globalization and the information age" (Addis Ababa, 24-28 October 1999). The Forum was attended by more than 950 participants, including community activists representing civil society, technical experts from the public and private sectors, academics, senior public officials and several heads of State — all of whom stand to benefit from the use of information technology for development. The cooperating agencies collaborating with ECA in organizing the Forum were UNDP and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

18. The Forum spurred interest in a number of initiatives that ECA has been assisting and encouraging in African countries. These include plans for a regional "SchoolNet Africa" project, an African distance learning programme, discussion lists and activities related to gender and the information age, NGONT Africa, a telecentre network, activities to support the involvement of the African diaspora in using knowledge for development in Africa and formation of a business-to-business network and national action groups in several countries of the region as well as an African Information Society Youth Network.

19. A series of programmes, of which African Member States will be the direct beneficiaries, are also taking place in follow-up to the Forum. They are in the areas of policy and regulation within a broad information and communication policy context, applications to support education processes, and meeting the needs of Africa's youth, electronic commerce and information and communication technology applications in the area of health.

20. The proposals were finalized at a review meeting (Addis Ababa, from 27-29 March 2000), where the results of the African Development Forum were assessed. The Forum, an ECA initiative, is a high-level forum led by Africans in search of African solutions to African problems. The Forum provides an Africa-led regional opportunity for high-level dialogue with African policy makers and other stakeholders, as well as Africa's development partners, on key aspects of the development challenges facing the continent. A post-Forum summit will be held in September 2000 in South Africa, where about 15 African heads of State will meet with public, private and civil society experts in information technology, as well as with representatives of multilateral and bilateral development agencies. The President of South Africa has accepted an invitation to host this post-Forum summit.

21. ECA provides advisory services and ongoing technical assistance and organizes national-level workshops to stimulate policy awareness about information technology and to help countries in designing and adopting national information and communication infrastructure plans. ECA is currently working in 22 countries. To date, 10 countries have approved national information and communication infrastructure plans.

22. The harnessing of information for development activities in Africa has been a primary focus of the Global Knowledge Partnership. The African Development Forum was the major African region event feeding into the Second Global Knowledge Conference (Kuala Lumpur, 7-10 March 2000).

23. A database of major meetings and events on Africa has been published on the Internet (*www.unsia.org/event*) as a tool for conference organizers and participants. ECA provided sensitization briefings and training on the use and application of the database for United Nations agencies in Addis Ababa, at the Special Initiative secretariat in New York and at the ECA subregional development centres.

24. The Telecommunication Development Bureau, the development arm of ITU, has undertaken the following actions in the area of reform, legislation and regulation of telecommunications: regulatory workshops were held in Botswana and Niger; assistance was provided to the Telecom Regulators' Association in Southern Africa; and a number of African countries obtained advice on regulatory matters. In the area of technologies and global information infrastructure, telemedicine pilot projects were implemented in Mozambique and Uganda and another is planned for Senegal. For finance and economics, workshops on cost-based tariffs and the new accounting rate regime were held to improve the tariff structure of telecommmunication services.

25. In January 2000 a special programme for the least developed countries was launched with an innovation to concentrate Telecommunication Development

Bureau assistance in a small number of countries at one time in order to make a greater impact. Of the six countries selected for the year, four were in Africa: Chad, Comoros, Ethiopia and Sudan. It is important to note that the gender dimension has been mainstreamed into all the programmed activities.

26. ITU was designated as the coordinating agency for the following components of the harnessing information technology for development programme: Internet connectivity, democratization of access to the information society, training, and national information and communication infrastructure. The Bureau has provided advice to some individual countries in the introduction of Internet services. A business plan was prepared for Uganda as well as specifications and tender documents for Internet equipment for a new Internet service provider. A guide for the introduction of Internet services was drafted for distribution to all African countries. The planning and implementation of five multipurpose community telecentre pilot projects is continuing in Benin, Mali, Mozambique, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, in partnership with national and local partners and with UNESCO and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) initially. Other agencies have joined or expressed their intention to collaborate on some of those projects, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), the British Council, the Sustainable Development Networking Programme of UNDP and the Canadian International Development Agency.

27. Training in the use of information technology for distance learning was provided by ITU to English- and French-speaking African countries, and training was provided to nearly all African countries on how to cope with year-2000 problems. The African Advanced Level Telecommunication Institute in Nairobi and the École supérieure multinationale de télécommunication in Dakar were assisted by the Telecommunication Development Bureau. The Bureau also assisted in a project on building information communities in Africa in South Africa. Direct assistance was provided to the Central African Republic, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania on the planning of rural telecommunications. A seminar on the financing and development of rural telecommunications was held in Kampala for English-speaking countries. The Bureau continued to promote the expansion and modernization of the telecommunication information infrastructure at the national and regional (Afritel) levels.

28. Since June 1999, the inter-agency multipurpose community telecentre pilot programme has been developed with the support and assistance of the cooperating agencies. The telecentres were initiated in Malaville, Benin (in cooperation with IDRC, ITU and UNDP), in Manhica and Namaacha, Mozambique (in cooperation with IDRC), and in Sengerema, United Republic of Tanzania (in cooperation with IDRC and ITU). The telecentres in Timbuktu, Mali, and Nakaseke, Uganda, are fully operational and are serving paying customers as well as providing development-oriented information services and applications as a public service. A participatory evaluation process has been initiated (based on the IDRC Acacia method) to prepare a comprehensive report on sustainability, development impact and technical findings for African member States.

29. In training, a subregional workshop on networking was organized with ECA and UNESCO support in August 1999 at the African Advanced Level Telecommunication Institute in Nairobi. A national workshop was also organized in February 2000 by the Ghana National Committee on Internet Connectivity under the World Bank's information for development (*info*Dev) project on improving access to telematics facilities in the public service sector in Ghana. The aim was to train representatives of the 100 public service institutions who were to be provided with Internet access in the new public service telematics network being established under the project. Advanced short courses for African specialists were organized in Israel in cooperation with UNESCO on information retrieval in June 1999 and on networking in November 1999. UNESCO, in collaboration with the World Bank's World Links for Development Programme (WORLD) successfully completed and evaluated a pilot project on creating learning networks for African teachers. UNESCO also supported a pilot project in Senegal to complete user training and an interactive web site and completed the pilot project on training of secondary-school teachers in informatics and telematics in Uganda. The experience gained is serving in the African Science and Technology Education Network feasibility study initiated by UNESCO and the World Bank.

30. Cape Verde and the Sudan joined the UNESCO Regional Informatics Network for Africa (RINAF),

which provides a framework for promoting telematics for development in Africa in support of the African Information Society Initiative and the Special Initiative. The number of African countries participating in RINAF is now 43. A RINAF workshop was organized during the latest African Development Forum. It led to the formulation of a regional programme for promoting telematics in the public sector to be proposed for inter-agency support within the Special Initiative. UNESCO was one of the principal partners in the Forum and assisted 12 countries in preparing national information and communication infrastructure country profiles for the Forum. ECA and UNESCO followed up the assistance they provided to Rwanda, initiated at the 1998 national workshop on telematics policies, by helping to prepare a national information and communication infrastructure policy framework that was discussed and adopted at a second workshop, in January 2000. UNESCO, with the collaboration of ECA, assisted Nigeria to hold a national policy workshop on information and communication technologies in development in March 2000. UNESCO also sponsored a regional workshop on "infoethics", organized during the Bamako 2000 conference convened by the President of Mali in February 2000. These workshops aimed at stimulating the formulation of national and regional information and communication infrastructures with public sector and infoethics components.

31. UNESCO initiated an extended version of the "Sahel point doc" database on CD-ROM, which will include a much larger selection of documents of the Sahel countries themselves and will subsequently be updated regularly by the participating countries. A similar CD-ROM has been initiated in East Africa. Another CD-ROM, entitled "Internet au Sud", published by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research in 1999 and distributed free of charge in developing countries, is a reference library on the Internet and information society for use in developing countries. This CD-ROM, which is in French, is aimed at technologists, users and decision-makers and contains a compendium of information, including free software, learning aids, articles and essays on challenges and strategies concerning the Internet and questions of its management and organization. The "top 50" competition for African web sites in education, science, culture, public information and community development was successfully organized and published on the Web in 1999. An analytical study of the results with recommendations for developing improved African content on the Web was completed and disseminated.

D. Education

32. The Special Initiative cluster on education, jointly coordinated by UNESCO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank, with the collaboration of UNDP, has developed a strategy to support basic education in the 16 low enrolment countries. The focus of this work has been on expanding access and improving quality, with a special emphasis on the education of girls. The partnership under this cluster is progressing well. The Administrative Committee on Coordination Steering Committee, in its meeting of 14 May 1999, had recommended that: (a) cooperation emerging from the low enrolment countries should be extended to some of the more advanced countries; (b) possibilities for cooperation with Oxfam and other organizations to reach an agreement on a global action plan should be explored; and (c) collaborative activities on the processing of sector investment programmes should be strengthened, including joint appraisal missions, donor consultations, common reporting requirements and harmonization of procedures in general. Critical activities on the implementation of these recommendations could not be effected due to lack of staff in the secretariat.

33. With respect to progress in the low enrolment countries, two countries, Ethiopia and Mozambique, have education sector development programmes in place with the preparatory support of the coordinating agencies. In Ethiopia, the programme involves a major reform of the whole educational system and gives top priority to increasing access, especially at the primary level (the goal is to increase the gross enrolment rate from 30 per cent to 50 per cent), and improving quality, particularly for the rural population and girls. The programme has a five-year time-frame in a long-term strategy to reverse the declining trend and to rapidly move towards universal primary education by 2015. In Mozambique, with the objective of reaching universal basic education by 2010, an education sector strategic programme was approved by the World Bank board in February 1999 for a total cost of $717.2 million, of

which $71 million would be financed by the World Bank.

34. The education sector development programmes are expected to be ready for external financing by the end of 2000 in five countries (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Rwanda). In Burkina Faso, the programme will be aimed at increasing access to primary education from 40 per cent to 75 per cent by 2005 and improving quality and equity. In Guinea, it is aimed at attaining universal primary attendance and improving quality through teacher upgrading, greater availability of textbooks, better student health and promotion of decentralization of teacher recruitment and management. The preparatory process has been supported by the Norwegian Education Trust Fund as well as the Government and the United Nations system's joint programme on basic education for all (2000-2004). The programme is based on an efficient and very active partnership at all stages (from formulation to implementation, monitoring and evaluation). In Mali, it is expected to expand access to primary education and improve equity through training and recruitment of teachers, classroom construction, curriculum reform, improved supply of education materials and decentralization of management. Meanwhile, a learning and innovative loan on community-based schooling is under way. In Niger, a 10-year sector programme, which is aimed at extending access to basic education with the tentative target of a 70 per cent enrolment ratio in 10 years and improving the gender ratio and quality of teaching and learning, is in process. In Rwanda, the Rwanda human resources development project will focus on increasing access and improving quality and is envisaged to serve as a precursor to a broader sector-wide programme that is aimed at coordinating all donor education assistance in support of the policies and strategies of the Ministry of Education's policy framework.

35. The preparatory process in Burkina Faso was supported by all donors. The Government and the United Nations system's Joint Programme on Basic Education for All launched a $20 million programme with the following objectives: (a) to provide quality basic education for all; (b) to extend access and improve accessibility to basic education for all population groups; (c) to strengthen institutional capacities; and (d) to promote education for girls and women, especially in rural and poor urban areas. This programme is based on an efficient and very active partnership at all stages (from formulation to implementation, monitoring and evaluation). The illustration of such a partnership can be made by considering the share of the burden in the funding mechanism adopted, namely (a) the Government of Burkina Faso, $1.13 million (5.55 per cent); (b) communities, $0.25 million (1.29 per cent); (c) United Nations system (UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO, WFP), $11.03 million (54.25 per cent); and (d) other partners (CRS/Cathwell), $7.92 million (39 per cent).

36. The World Bank, in collaboration with UNESCO, has been supporting subregional activities, including countries outside of the 16 low enrolment countries. In fact, the two lead agencies have provided support in the preparation of sector development programmes for which financing has been approved to the Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho and Zambia. For Nigeria, a basic education operation will be ready for external financing in May 2000 and, in collaboration with UNESCO, the World Bank is helping in a major sector development programme. Basic education operations are also under preparation in other countries, including Cameroon and Kenya. An adult literacy operation is in process for Côte d'Ivoire, and work supported by the Special Initiative is also under way in Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The World Bank and UNESCO have held several meetings with other partners to discuss follow-up actions after the publication of the Oxfam report entitled "Education Now", which created considerable interest. Furthermore, the World Bank, as the coordinating agency for the education cluster, convened a joint consultative meeting in Paris on 21 and 22 October 1999 on the strategy to assist the education sector in sub-Saharan Africa.

37. In Madagascar, United Nations agencies (FAO, ILO, UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO and WHO) have committed themselves to jointly support the Government in developing a $25 million programme to promote basic education for all children in the country. This five-year programme (2000-2004) has nine components or subprogrammes covering: (a) early childhood and family education; (b) an "education for all" management information system; (c) training of trainers; (d) education of women and girls; (e) education of disadvantaged groups; (f) literacy and adult education; (g) technical and vocational basic skill training of adults, adolescents and young people in rural and poor urban areas;

(h) endogenous capacity-building for the development and provision of basic learning and training materials; and (i) a subprogramme on programme coordination, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation.

38. With regard to the difficult challenge of educating girls, efforts are beginning to bear fruit. For example, in Chad, Eritrea and Ethiopia, there have been noticeable gains in the enrolment of girls. There have also been opportunities to address gender issues in sector enrolment programmes and sector-wide approaches in Ethiopia, Uganda and Zambia. However, sustaining interest in what are, by definition, long-term processes remains a challenge, and the difficulty of maintaining essential and ongoing funding comes, unfortunately, at the same time as communities and Governments have accepted the importance of and have committed themselves to the education of girls, which also requires resources.

39. Within the framework of the Special Initiative, a study of success factors on education for girls was carried out in three West African countries (Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali). At the conclusion of this study, the World Bank and its principal partners organized a seminar/workshop in Nouakchott with the three above-mentioned countries, plus Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. The objective of this meeting was to share the results of the research, to take a new look at the significance of the results in relation to the programmes concerning the education of girls and to define suggestions on the best ways to integrate these results into the educational policies in countries of the subregion. The World Bank and its partners have contributed to the training of teacher trainers in Guinea to counter gender bias in the classroom as part of the preparation for a learning and innovations loan to reform teacher training. This reform activity will also receive assistance from UNICEF. In addition, four countries — Chad, Guinea, Mali and Mozambique — have expressed interest in a tutoring programme being developed as a strategy for addressing repetition and dropout rates, especially for girls. A regional strategy paper is being finalized to help task team leaders to better mainstream the education of girls in World Bank operations.

40. Furthermore, a programme to improve literacy rates among women and girls in the Gambia is being supported with $980,000 from UNDP. The goal is to expand access to basic non-formal education for 20,000 illiterate persons by 2001. Apart from providing functional reading and writing skills, the project is training women to participate in income-generating activities in such areas as agriculture and food processing. The Gambia has an overall illiteracy rate of 76 per cent; 68 per cent for women and girls.

41. Within the context of the Special Initiative, the World Bank launched a programme designed to assess whether and how the region should increase its support for adult literacy and adult education programmes. The objective has been: (a) to survey and assess current and past practices; (b) to build national capacity by having most of this surveying done by national teams; and (c) to provide support to prepare projects or project components on adult literacy. As at April 2000, the progress made towards these objectives is encouraging. Issues related to adult literacy and, especially, to the severe constraint that the high illiteracy rate among African women puts on implementing an effective poverty-reduction strategy, have been put squarely on the agenda of the assistance programme of the World Bank. As a result, several free-standing projects or project components on adult literacy are being developed.[3]

42. The focus of the low enrolment countries in the second half of 1999 was on assembling the data required for the education for all 2000 assessment, an exercise recognized as critical for the development and implementation of sectoral investment programmes, sector-wide approaches and sector development programmes.

43. UNICEF worked actively with UNESCO, the World Bank and the national Governments in the preparation of the national education for all assessment reports, including most of the low enrolment countries. In the case of Somalia, UNICEF worked with community leaders to prepare the most up-to-date report on education and access yet available for the country. The funding for this came from the World Bank Development Grant Facility.

44. The low enrolment countries were given special priority in the allocation of Development Grant Facility funds assigned to UNICEF to support capacity-building in educational statistics. Some $66,000 (31 per cent) of the Facility's tranche I for statistical capacity-building was assigned to regional offices for African countries, 25 per cent of which was assigned directly to low enrolment countries. Particular focus on these projects

will be on building local capacity in educational statistics and in monitoring learning achievement. UNICEF gave preference in assigning these funds to low enrolment countries, especially those, such as Liberia, which have limited access to other sources of grant or loan funding.

45. The activities undertaken within the Special Initiative in favour of basic education for all African children show that efficiency is much higher when the international institutions work together with the countries concerned. However, despite the valuable effort made by countries and their partners for development and the achievement of some significant results, the low enrolment in primary education and the low literacy rate in the 16 selected countries remains virtually the same as reported last year (E/AC.51/1999/6, para. 40). The proportion of the school-age population out of school remains very high, while the schooling rate for girls remains low in many countries.

46. The prevailing situation is a consequence of several factors that are already being addressed but on which efforts have to be intensified. These include the high costs of educational materials and services, the difficulty of access to educational resources, the lack of very clearly defined and coherent educational and training policies and the weakness of the institutional capacity of countries to effectively deliver a high-quality basic education for all.

E. Health

47. At present in Africa, malaria still claims about as many lives as AIDS, and preventable childhood diseases kill millions of others. The United Nations system agencies are collaborating to support the African countries' efforts to address many of these issues specifically as well as the formulation and implementation of health sector reforms in general. As a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, much of Africa will enter the twenty-first century experiencing major losses after 40 years of hard-won development gains. The epidemic infects 150 Africans every hour, and spending on AIDS care is crowding out spending on other life-saving and cost-effective programmes. According to the Human Development Report 1999,[4] of the 34 countries hit hardest by the disease, 31 are African. AIDS deaths reached a record 2.6 million, and new HIV infections continue unabated. Thus, the problem of HIV/AIDS has been the focus of health initiatives undertaken by United Nations system organizations.

48. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates that by 2010, AIDS will have doubled the mortality of children under five years of age in regions that are most affected by the virus. Deaths due to HIV/AIDS are eclipsing the gains made in improving child nutrition and in reducing child mortality by diminishing the rate of death from tetanus, measles, diarrhoea and pneumonia. Many of the 14 million Africans who have already died and many of those infected with HIV/AIDS have been or are parents or caregivers of young children. The enormous challenge of caring for these orphans is compounded by the fact that a substantial proportion of young children of parents who have died of AIDS will themselves become sick with HIV-related disease.

49. The UNAIDS theme group has been supporting efforts of Governments and non-governmental organizations to prevent and control HIV/AIDS in Africa. Some of the strategies used included provision of technical expertise, training of health care providers in the diagnosis and syndromic management of sexually transmitted diseases, supply of condoms, HIV/AIDS prevention, informational, educational and communication materials, including television series. Most of the efforts at the country level are carried out in support of and in collaboration with national AIDS control programmes under the HIV/AIDS theme groups in the countries. Those groups have been strengthened, resulting in better coordination and collaboration and the development of a strategic framework and joint programming to combat HIV/AIDS.

50. The launch of the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa was announced at the eleventh International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Africa, held in Lusaka in September 1999. The partnership will help African Governments put in place comprehensive national AIDS programmes in the next 5 to 10 years. It will also seek to reduce by 25 per cent the number of new HIV infections among young people in the most affected African countries by 2005 and all of Africa by 2010. The positive response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa under the International Partnership since the meeting in Annapolis, United States of America, in January 1999 is unprecedented. Drawing on the International Partnership, ECA will convene the

Second African Development Forum in October 2000 on the theme "HIV/AIDS: the greatest African leadership challenge".

51. The agenda of the second Forum is designed to deepen the emerging African political commitment to tackle the HIV challenge, to catalyse donor support to African countries on the basis of national plans prepared by those countries and to disseminate the lessons of experience and encourage best practices. Participants will include senior African government policy makers, representatives of civil society, African think-tanks and the private sector. The Forum will also reach out to a wide range of Africa's development partners, including those in the United Nations system, bilateral and international organizations and the private sector. The Forum's deliberations will be supported by forward-looking national action plans, findings of analytical and policy studies and syntheses of lessons gained through experience in countries such as Senegal and Uganda, which are successfully handling the HIV challenge.

52. As part of the International Partnership, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in collaboration with other United Nations system organizations, has undertaken some specific responses, namely: (a) it ensured that HIV/AIDS was emphasized during the five-year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and that targets for reducing HIV/AIDS were included in the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-first special session (S-21/2, para. 70), namely, that the means to prevent and control HIV/AIDS should be available to 90 per cent of young people aged 15 to 24 by 2005 and to 95 per cent by 2010; (b) in view of the multisectoral response needed to combat HIV/AIDS, UNFPA, in collaboration with WHO, the UNAIDS secretariat, other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, in July 1999 organized a training workshop on HIV/AIDS for the 60 multidisciplinary country support team advisers in Africa to ensure that they would be able to assist Governments in mainstreaming HIV/AIDS interventions in all population and reproductive health programmes; (c) to further strengthen the technical resources available within the UNFPA country support teams to help build national capacities, UNFPA is recruiting four country support team advisers specifically on sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and AIDS, with the financial support of UNAIDS and the Swedish International Development Agency; and (d) UNFPA has taken the lead, in collaboration with the UNAIDS secretariat, to develop a joint regional advocacy initiative against HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa to enlist the political commitment and financial support of the leadership in sub-Saharan Africa at all levels to put in place policies, programmes and other interventions to combat the epidemic in the region.

53. In the area of youth and adolescent reproductive health, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and UNESCO support the provision of sexual and reproductive health information and/or counselling and services to youth and adolescents in Africa.

54. In response to various countries' requests for assistance in controlling HIV/AIDS among young people, and in a bid to explore innovative approaches with respect to partnerships and securing additional resources, UNFPA resorted to mobilizing funds from the private sector and foundations. UNFPA has secured $57 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for preventing and controlling HIV/AIDS among young people in four African countries (Botswana, Ghana, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania) for five years, starting in 2000. The initiative is to bring about a reduction in HIV/AIDS infection rates through behaviour change, communication, advocacy, skills development, access to reproductive health information and services and the strengthening of institutional capacity. The initiative will be implemented in collaboration with the concerned Governments, other United Nations agencies and international and national non-governmental organizations. The Alliance with Youth for Reproductive Health in Sub-Saharan Africa project of UNFPA in collaboration with other partners has a regional component for coordinating and providing technical assistance for the implementation of the projects in the four countries mentioned above. It will also help in sharing experiences with other countries in Africa for the replication of successful examples.

55. Every year at least a million people die from malaria, most of them young children under 5 years of age, and 90 per cent of those deaths occur in Africa, south of the Sahara. WHO, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank jointly launched a global "roll back malaria" initiative aimed at reducing the rate of death among young children as a result of malaria by 50 per cent by 2010.

56. UNICEF supports malaria control projects in 33 countries, 27 of them in Africa, mainly by providing support to community malaria control programmes. This is to ensure that: (a) all children and their families in malaria-endemic regions have access to effective and affordable treatment within eight hours of the onset of illness; (b) all young children and pregnant women at risk of malaria are protected by regularly sleeping under treated mosquito nets; and (c) all pregnant women have access to good antenatal care and receive preventive treatment against malaria.

57. UNICEF and WHO have collaborated in an immunization programme, which has been one of the most successful development programmes ever introduced in its ability to significantly reduce infant and child mortality rates. UNICEF supported the strengthening of health systems, transportation, the monitoring of follow-up and media outreach. However, 20 countries remained below the level of 50 per cent coverage; of those, 16 were in Africa. Political instability and poor management, according to the 1998 annual report of WHO, are key factors hindering progress. Major constraints in the immunization programme have also included the inability of countries to introduce new and underutilized vaccines because of inadequate funding. Vaccines for hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) are now available, and other vaccines will shortly be on the market. The safety of injections is an urgent programme issue that requires more attention at the country level.

58. UNICEF has played a pivotal role in the effort to eradicate polio, including being one of the world's largest purchasers of vaccines. As long as polio persists, all countries need to continue routine immunization and increase the number and quality of national immunization days. This last push will require adequate staff, financing and supply of oral polio vaccine. The virus can be eliminated, but efforts will need to be continued at the present level for at least two years after 2000. At the end of 1999, there were 22 remaining polio-infected countries in Africa: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Togo.

59. With respect to health sector reform, the principal large-scale multi-country activity under the Special Initiative's health cluster has been a series of three intercountry workshops, in Cotonou, Addis Ababa and Maputo, on health sector reform and development. The workshops brought together some 300 participants, including top-level officials from health and finance ministries and from planning offices, budget offices, offices of the President, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

60. To deepen the process of exchange of experience and to help individual African countries with specific issues, it has been agreed that the main focus should now move away from global health reform workshops towards highly focused exchanges between individual African countries. The visit of a team from Uganda to Ghana in February 2000, funded by WHO, is a case in point. Ugandan officials from a wide variety of public agencies met with a large range of Ghanaian staff at the national, regional and local levels. Lessons learned included: (a) the importance of country context; (b) the importance of government leadership of the sector-wide approach process; (c) the specific challenges of decentralization, especially in reconciling the technical sectoral imperatives of the Ministry of Health and its deconcentrated services with the multisectoral perspectives of autonomous local governments; (d) the critical importance of issues related to human resources in health care in both countries; (e) the complexities and nuances of the process of contracting between Governments and non-governmental providers; and (f) the importance of an operational programme of monitoring agreed targets. The Uganda team noted a high level of awareness of performance-based implementation issues in Ghana. It is noteworthy, also, that the study tour by the Uganda team to Ghana was not a one-way learning experience; following their exchanges with the Uganda counterparts, the Ghanaians decided to design a new component for the fight against HIV/AIDS for inclusion in their ongoing health sector programme.

61. In September 1999, four officers from the Ministry of Health of Kenya, funded by WHO, visited Uganda and Zambia to study health reform issues. Those visits provided an opportunity for Kenya to learn some lessons from its counterparts, particularly those related to community participation, commitment leading to ownership, the involvement of the finance ministry, the autonomy of hospitals, the collaboration between Governments and non-governmental organizations and the success of the HIV/AIDS

programme in Uganda. The usefulness of those visits has been demonstrated by the follow-up activities Kenya has undertaken since then. These include the development of a strategy paper on decentralization and the holding of a series of consensus-building meetings on health reforms.

62. In November 1999, high-ranking members of the Alliance of African Mayors and Municipal Leaders on HIV/AIDS in Africa completed a one-week visit to the United States to seek broad support for HIV/AIDS programmes. The HIV and Development Programme of UNDP sponsored the visit, which enabled the mayors to meet with members of the United States Congress and with representatives of non-governmental organizations, community groups and research organizations. The objective and outcome was to draw attention to the devastating impact HIV/AIDS is having on African societies. Additional multi-country activities are in preparation, including a workshop that would bring together staff from a series of francophone West African countries for an exchange of experiences on sector reform programmes.

63. In order to involve more stakeholders in health sector reforms, several countries in the region planned to organize at the national level one-day sensitization meetings. Mozambique and Zambia have already organized their meetings. The Central African Republic plans to hold its one-day meeting this year. Other countries (e.g., Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania) have also expressed their interest in this activity.

64. Following a briefing of the West Africa Health Committee on sector-wide approaches, the Chairman developed a proposal for a three-day meeting on the subject. The meeting will bring together multidisciplinary high-level teams from each of the five member countries (Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo), two of which must have already developed sector-wide approaches. This enables the three other countries that have not developed sector-wide approaches to learn from the other two. This meeting is planned for the first half of 2000.

65. Some of the lessons learned from the inter-country activities include the following: (a) African stakeholders and their external partners often assume a level of common understanding and acceptance of the sector-wide approach concept that does not correspond to the underlying reality. Differences of interpretation and understanding give rise to problems of communication, and call for significant efforts at mutual understanding between African countries and their development partners; and (b) the need for focus, and not merely a broad sweep, during the design and execution of reforms. This calls for concentrated attention not just on the process of health reform but also on expected outcomes, including at the level of health status, whether this is associated with malaria, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health or any other health programme or initiative.

66. The possibilities offered by other sectors to contribute to the improvement of health outcomes merit further emphasis; this requires mobilization of other sectoral departments of government, as well as prime ministers and presidents. Thus, the importance of civil society and the private sector as key sectors and sources of funds merits greater attention. The problems of governance and their linkages with reform programmes merit further exploration at both the global and sectoral levels. It is only when there is a true national consensus among all the principal stakeholders that a broad sectoral programme of health reform can be sustainable.

67. Organizing and financing the multi-country activities of the health component of the Special Initiative has been challenging. It has been agreed by WHO and the World Bank that WHO would take the lead in organizing individual activities after their outline has been agreed upon and that the individual task manager and WHO country representatives should be engaged in a major way. Norway has made available trust funds to assist the World Bank in financing such multi-country activities, and an extended professional exchange was organized in Oslo in October 1999 on the full range of Norwegian trust funds for human development executed under the auspices of the World Bank.

68. In order to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of achievements under the health component of the Special Initiative, WHO and the World Bank are developing tools for measuring progress in health sector reforms. Those tools would also help countries to monitor their own progress.

F. Population and gender

69. UNFPA is the coordinating agency for the population cluster of the Special Initiative, and the partners involved in this component are the African Governments, ECA, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, UNAIDS, the International Labour Organization (ILO), FAO, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNESCO, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB), bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations and private foundations. The extent to which the agencies are involved in the population component depends on their mandate and their representation at the national, regional and global levels. Overall, the Special Initiative improved partnership and collaboration in the area of population interventions in the region, particularly in situations where needs are beyond the resources and mandate of any one United Nations agency.

70. Progress continues to be made in the integration of population into development policies, plans and programmes in Africa, because of: (a) increased awareness of population issues among the leadership; (b) more involvement of Governments and community participation in the design and implementation of population activities, thus enhancing ownership; and (c) increased expertise available at the country level to implement population programmes. Twenty-two countries have officially adopted population policies, and others are in the process of doing so. More than 15 countries are in the process of formulating or reviewing their national population policies to include recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development and other relevant international and regional conferences.

71. Despite these noticeable advances, political and social instabilities, especially in the Great Lakes region, Congo, the Central African Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone, are still slowing down the momentum of population programme implementation.

72. As part of the implementation of the Special Initiative, UNFPA is facilitating and supporting the planning, conduct, analysis and dissemination of censuses in 26 African countries. The support may include the provision of equipment, vehicles and training, the payment of salaries and allowances to personnel and technical expertise. Examples of country-level support to censuses include the following: Ghana, which started its census on 27 March 2000, and Kenya, which has just released the provisional results of the August 1999 census (which put the population at 28.6 million), both of which received support from UNFPA and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and Mauritania, in which UNFPA, in collaboration with the World Bank, is supporting the census. In Togo, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the United States Agency for International Development jointly provide both the Government and the donor community with updated and reliable data for programme planning, monitoring and evaluation. Agencies and countries that are supporting censuses or surveys in one country or another include UNFPA, UNDP, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the United States Agency for International Development, the World Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the European Union, the Netherlands, the Swedish International Development Authority, Denmark, Norway, the Australian Agency for International Development, Germany and France. In addition, UNFPA, as a member of the Inter-Agency Census Coordinating Committee for Sub-Saharan Africa, organizes census coordination meetings, at the global and country levels, to mobilize more resources for censuses in Africa.

73. UNFPA is collaborating with the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in the preparation of the 2000 census initiative to harmonize census operations in the 14 SADC member States. The assistance provided by UNFPA is in the areas of training in census planning and management, including analysing data, building institutional and human resources capacity, providing technical experts and mobilizing resources for the census. The objective is to strengthen the capabilities of the SADC member countries in the collection, processing and dissemination of data, in particular ensuring that population and housing censuses and large-scale surveys are planned properly and conducted in a timely manner. UNFPA is supporting the project in the amount of $568,150 over 1999 to 2001, while $112,500 will be provided by SADC. In addition, the United States Agency for International Development, through the United States Bureau of the Census, will support two workshops. The Statistics Division of the

Department of Economic and Social Affairs will provide technical and financial assistance for all the workshops, and the Swedish International Development Authority will provide some consultants. Two workshops in the areas identified above were conducted for representatives of the 14 SADC member States between March 1999 and April 2000.

74. UNFPA supports the network of African women ministers and parliamentarians to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women. The members meet every two years. The purpose of the meetings is to assess and strengthen the role of African women ministers and parliamentarians in promoting reproductive and sexual health and rights, women's empowerment and gender equality. The meetings also reiterate the need to reinforce the commitments of African Governments to continue to implement the agreements made at the two conferences for the benefit of Africans, and especially for the benefit of women and girls. The next meeting of the network of ministers and parliamentarians, to be organized in collaboration with the Government of Namibia, will take place in July 2000. The theme is adolescent reproductive health for Africa's young people. UNAIDS, ECA and other agencies and non-governmental organizations will participate in the meeting.

75. UNFPA, in collaboration with other partners, provides technical assistance to countries in Africa in the areas of reproductive health, including sexual health and family planning, population and development strategies and advocacy, as well as in cross-cutting areas such as gender and information, education and communication, management information systems and logistics and socio-cultural research. The aim of the technical assistance programme is to build national capacity and to contribute to the sustainability of national population programmes. The partners involved in the technical support programme include ECA, ILO UNESCO, FAO, WHO and UNIFEM.

76. UNFPA, within its country programmes, assists African Governments to build national human resources capacity through training, South-South cooperation and technical assistance to manage and implement the population policy action plans and programmes and the reproductive health, population, family life education and advocacy programmes. Capacity-building in Africa also includes strengthening of the population and planning departments to coordinate the multisectoral approach involved in the implementation of population policies and the utilization of population variables in development planning. In addition to country programmes, UNFPA provides support to training institutions to build capacity in the implementation of population programmes in the region. These include the reproductive health-training centre in Mauritius operated in collaboration with African Governments and ECA.

77. UNFPA, in collaboration with the Division of Food Security and Sustainable Development of ECA, developed a prototype population, environment, development and agriculture computer model in order to raise the awareness of African policy makers and planners on interlinkages of the issues and to promote the understanding of relationships between women's reproductive health and household food security. The model has been successfully developed in Africa.

78. A programme to improve opportunities for women in post-war Liberia, costing $572,000, has been set up by UNDP and UNIFEM. The initiative will promote the advancement of women in the areas of education, governance, decision-making, credit and health, and will provide capacity-building for key institutions and policy makers. Liberian women's non-governmental organizations, national training institutions and civil society organizations will cooperate in the project. Only 22 per cent of Liberian women are literate compared with 54 per cent of men. In view of such marginalization of women in Liberian society, it is hoped that the efforts made will help to reverse the situation and increase women's participation in business and government.

G. Poverty eradication

79. Since the last progress report, the programme of action relating to the reduction of poverty through the promotion of the informal sector and employment-generating activities has been finalized. It was agreed to have a division of labour among three key Inter-Agency Task Force members — the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ECA and ILO — regarding the implementation of initial country

sensitization workshops initially in the 20 African countries.

80. The United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa's Technical Working Group met in 1999 in Nairobi and made the following recommendations: (a) as far as possible, the component should be implemented through the existing United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the resident coordinator system; (b) the division of labour indicated above could be modified to allow other Task Force organizations to take over some of the countries that are now assigned to ILO and ECA; and (c) the raising of seed money from the agencies would simplify the implementation of the plan of action in general and facilitate the sensitization workshops in particular, although in previous meetings it had been decided that organizations should use their own funds in the preparation phase.

81. Within the framework of the poverty eradication cluster, the Office of the Special Coordinator organized an interregional workshop of the Asia-Africa Expert Group on the Promotion of the Informal Sector in Africa entitled "Moving from trading subsectors to more productive and value-added activities" (Nairobi, 8-10 December 1999), with the active participation of the Special Initiative secretariat. The findings of this workshop will be used for the planning and implementation of the programme of action of the Special Initiative component on poverty reduction.

82. The Task Force organized a meeting of the organizations based in Addis Ababa on 25 January 2000 to discuss progress and further action in relation to the programme of action on the reduction of poverty through the promotion of the informal sector and employment-generating opportunities. Organizations were requested to submit to the ILO office in Addis Ababa all planned activities that could be placed under the Special Initiative framework. In this connection, it was recommended that each member of the Task Force undertake to organize, on behalf of the Special Initiative component, a regional or subregional forum on a theme falling within its mandate and the relevant component of the programme of action.

83. ECA is preparing a draft manual based on the experience of the ECA informal sector projects in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana and Zambia. The projects are based on empowering the informal sector operators to address their problems. United Nations agencies will be invited to discuss and contribute to the manual. Work on the manual started in April 2000 and is expected to take three to four months. After it is completed, four subregional meetings will be held to raise funds to implement activities based on the manual. All task force members will be requested to participate in these meetings, which will be organized under the Special Initiative framework.

84. In the meantime, the ILO/UNDP Jobs for Africa programme: poverty-reducing employment strategies for Africa, has been making very good progress in formulating country action programmes in some 10 countries. Country-level donors' meetings will be held to mobilize resources and implement national projects on the ground in 2000. Studies to engineer policy shifts towards employment-intensive growth are nearing completion in Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, and will soon be under way in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Mali, Senegal and Zimbabwe.

85. ECA has provided credit and training to informal sector operators in Ethiopia and Zambia. The project is funded by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation as part of a pilot project, and it included the provision of participatory training to informal sector actors on leadership and business management skills as well as policy advocacy on the creation of favourable conditions for the growth of the informal sector.

86. The Habitat Special Programme for Africa was reviewed in May 1999 to bring it in line with the new strategic vision of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). This programme presents concrete modalities for advancing the provision of adequate shelter for all and promoting coherent and integrated urban development in Africa. Its achievements so far are rather marginal owing largely to lack of financial resources from both internal and external sources. However, it has created the strong awareness that shelter provision and urbanization are key ingredients of the development matrix in Africa.

87. In the area of providing adequate shelter for all, Habitat has undertaken several capacity-building projects in Africa for the efficient delivery of housing, especially in rural areas. The joint Cities Alliance programme, launched in December 1999 with the World Bank, will have a positive impact on several African cities. Cities in five countries, namely, Egypt,

Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria and South Africa, have been selected to benefit from the programme in 2000.

88. Habitat has achieved progress through the Urban Management Programme, the Sustainable Cities Programme, the Risk and Disaster Management Programme, the Safer Cities Programme and the Urban Environment Forum, which together are fostering sustainable development in the African urban environment. Successful achievements in related areas, such as the provision of urban water, waste management, disaster mitigation efforts that ensure continued development and social integration also need to be taken into account.

89. Habitat is currently providing technical assistance support and capacity-building in the areas of shelter and service provision and urban development in 25 African countries. The budget for providing and executing these activities has increased from $15.2 million in 1999 to an estimated $17.1 million in 2000.

90. The Office of the Special Coordinator is coordinating an important project in collaboration with UNDP on women, microcredit and poverty eradication. The main objective of this project, funded by the Government of Japan through the Gender in Development Programme of UNDP, is to demonstrate the potential contribution of microfinance in eradicating poverty. The target beneficiaries of the project are small and medium-sized women entrepreneurs, especially in rural areas, acting as individuals or in groups. The first two observation meetings have taken place in Ethiopia (July 1999) and Cameroon (February 2000). The third observation meeting was held near Lagos in April 2000. At the end of this project, it is expected that Governments and operational agencies will take over to integrate the findings into field project activities.

H. Trade access and opportunities

91. Africa's total trade represents only 1.5 per cent of international trade, while that of the least developed countries represents 0.4 per cent. A study by ECA projects that, once the Uruguay Round of agreements is fully implemented in 2005, sub-Saharan countries will lose $569 million per year, equivalent to one tenth of one per cent of real income.

92. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as a coordinating agency for the trade access and opportunity cluster, reports on three sets of activities that are being carried out, with the involvement of other organizations, to assist the African countries, particularly the least developed among them, in trade and capacity-building. These activities consist of: (a) the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme in Selected Least Developed and Other African Countries; (b) the Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries, including for human and institutional capacity-building, to support the least developed countries in their trade-related activities; and (c) the programme for capacity-building in trade and development in Africa, being carried out in conjunction with UNDP.

Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme in Selected Least Developed and Other African Countries

93. A joint programme of the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC), UNCTAD and the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme in Selected Least Developed and Other African Countries promotes its main objective by implementing a series of interconnected activities aimed at: building national capacity to understand the WTO agreements and their development implications for each beneficiary country, including for trade negotiations; adapting the policy and regulatory framework to the WTO agreements; and enhancing a country's capacity to take advantage of the WTO agreements through improved export readiness. The Programme's common trust fund for beneficiary countries was launched on 1 March 1998, with an estimated funding requirement of $10.3 million. At the end of 1999, total pledges to the Fund from 13 donor countries amounted to $8.2 million. The Fund is managed by ITC and is supervised by a steering group of representatives of donors, beneficiaries and the secretariats of ITC, UNCTAD and WTO. The eight beneficiary countries are Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Tunisia, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. In 1999, the three agencies implementing the Programme delivered activities at a cost of just under $3 million.

94. In early 1999, the Programme's management commissioned a business process review of the Programme (the report of which was sent to the steering group members in July 1999), identifying key

issues impeding delivery and sustainability of the Programme and suggesting solutions. These were, principally: (a) decentralization of the Programme in Geneva and to the field; and (b) provision of urgently needed financial support to the countries for undertaking national-level activities such as training in and dissemination of the multilateral trading system. At the end of July 1999, the Programme conducted a mission to Africa and consulted on solutions with focal points and other counterpart organizations. The frame of reference was the business process review report. During discussions the lack of financial support by the Programme for national training in the multilateral trading system and other activities emerged as the key issue, and there was strong consensus among focal points that this problem needed to be addressed fully and immediately if the Programme was to achieve its objectives. The mission found none of the countries in a position to finance needed multilateral trading system training and dissemination programmes. Nor were most, particularly the least developed countries, able to initiate effectively the WTO/inter-institutional processes or support all recurrent costs.

95. As a result of the mission, it was determined that funds on the order of $500,000 Programme-wide were urgently needed for a number of national initiatives and could be funded from economies under the cluster approach. To gain momentum and time, while maintaining the prerogatives of the steering group under common trust fund by-laws, the three agencies agreed to limit initial funding to half this amount, or about 3 per cent of average project costs. These limited funds were made available in 1999 along with guidelines for specific activities through the UNDP offices, with approval authority vested in regional coordinators. Feedback from the field indicates that planning and implementation of national activities in the areas concerned has begun, but not in all cases at the pace expected.

96. The implementation infrastructure (regional coordinators and national facilitators) has been put fully in place. Implementation advanced except in the export strategy formulation cluster, which is scheduled to follow national symposia designed to explore strategic scenarios. The symposia and related high-level seminars are scheduled in seven countries. Preparation of documentation for the symposia is in an advanced stage, including an analysis of the impact of the Uruguay Round of agreements on the national economies and matrices of products and markets. Eight subregional workshops on WTO agreements, designed to expand national networks of trainers, experts and advisers covering multilateral trading system issues, were organized in the east and west on technical barriers to trade regarding sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures, customs valuation, agriculture and the agreement on textiles and clothing. Similar additional workshops are planned in 2000.

97. Special training courses on the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) of UNCTAD were organized for Benin and Burkina Faso to help those countries in shifting to more advanced versions of this software. Work began in all Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme countries to develop an efficient and effective trade information service. Work is progressing well on the adaptation of "Trade Secrets" and "How to Approach Banks", published by ITC, and has started on an international database on quality and export packaging for national enquiry points. Arrangements have been finalized for study tours of national enquiry point managers to standards boards in Belgium and Germany and to the European Union enquiry points on technical barriers to trade regarding sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures.

Intercountry Programme for Capacity-Building in Trade and Development in Africa

98. In June 1999 an inter-agency agreement was signed by UNDP and UNCTAD to develop a programme designed to support sub-Saharan African countries in developing human resources, enabling institutions and enhancing negotiating capacity, which would assist them to effectively launch an export-led, high-growth path and enhance their integration into the regional economy and the multilateral trading system. In pursuance of this development objective, the "fast-track" module aims to provide to African government negotiators and other stakeholders in the private sector and civil society with critical and timely assistance that would enable them to formulate strategic and proactive trade policies and attendant negotiation objectives. Support was also provided to African countries in cooperation with UNDP and the African Economic Community (AEC) of OAU on multilateral trade negotiations, particularly in their preparations for the WTO meetings in Seattle, United States, in a workshop held in Pretoria (29 June-2 July 1999). In this workshop, experts from 30 participating countries also

considered and suggested recommendations for negotiations regarding the successor agreement to the Fourth Lomé Convention. Issues included: the interest of African countries in the agricultural negotiations; prospects for the extension of new preferences for sub-Saharan Africa; a positive agenda for subsidies and for the Agreement on Trade-related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights; and challenges for the post-Lomé trade framework for African countries. Similarly, in collaboration with UNDP and AEC, a series of subregional workshops was organized along with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), SADC, the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Community of Central African States.

Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries

99. The Inter-Agency Working Group met in Geneva in November 1999 and January 2000. Individual responses have been prepared by the six core agencies of the Framework — the International Monetary Fund (IMF), ITC, UNCTAD, UNDP, the World Bank and WTO — in the light of the needs assessments submitted by 40 least developed countries. The second phase of the project consists of organizing full-scale round-table meetings for each least developed country. The Working Group considered a status report prepared by its Administrative Unit on the preparatory study of round tables and multi-year programmes in the 40 countries that had completed needs assessments. It also reviewed in depth and exchanged views on problems encountered and concerns expressed and considered possible solutions. Among the major problems considered was the lack of financing for the Framework, as no pledges had been made by donor Governments. In accordance with its mandate, the Working Group also exchanged views on the review of the Framework and agreed that such a review should include a number of elements and criteria for its conduct. Furthermore, the World Bank would select a competent individual to provide an initial draft evaluation of the Integrated Framework, which would be prepared in consultation with the Working Group, Governments of the least developed countries and the donor community, as appropriate, based on the elements identified by the Working Group. The initial draft would be considered and revised by the Working Group and after clearance by the core agencies. The report would be forwarded to the General Council of WTO as well as to the governing bodies of the other core agencies.

100. A UNDP initiative, Africa 99, was set up to stimulate business and investment partnerships between United States and African enterprises. The first event in the series brought together business and political leaders from the United States and their counterparts from eight African countries in Hartford, United States, in April 1999 and has culminated in a number of deals between United States and African entrepreneurs. This was followed by the Corporate Council on Africa heads of State summit on the theme "attracting capital to Africa", also held in April 1999, in Houston, United States. In November 1999 a business exposition and trade and investment conference was held in Arizona. It has already helped to forge a strategic partnership between the Sahel region of Africa and the State of Arizona.

I. Economic diversification

101. UNCTAD is responsible for coordinating the implementation of economic diversification programmes. As a first step, an outline of a programme on economic diversification was prepared and submitted to CPC at its thirty-ninth session (E/AC.51/1999/6, annex I). Since then, the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, in close collaboration with UNCTAD, organized an ad hoc expert group meeting on diversification of African economies in the new global context in November 1999. The specific objectives of the meeting were to evaluate the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the General Assembly on diversification, to re-examine the prospects for diversification in the new global context and to outline a more comprehensive and practical operational framework for sustainable diversification of African economies.

102. The meeting was attended by experts from 10 African countries (Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). A selected number of subregional organizations, United Nations and other international agencies involved in diversification and regional and subregional organizations, including UNCTAD, UNIDO, ECA, UNDP, FAO, WTO, ITC, the International Finance Corporation, the World Bank, the

Common Fund for Commodities, OAU, AfDB, COMESA and SADC, as well as two experts from developed countries, attended.

103. The experts stressed that the process of diversification should be driven by the private sector, therefore, the development and support of the private sector by African Governments and their development partners are important. They also underscored the importance of, among other things, implementing sound macroeconomic policies, strengthening domestic institutions and establishing a good regulatory framework for investment, both local and foreign, and a liberalized trade policy. In addition to an overall enabling environment, experts pointed to the urgency of developing supply capacity and competitiveness. It was noted that even with increased access to markets, the majority of African countries would have problems supplying non-traditional exports because of the difficulties they face in meeting international quality standards combined with other factors, such as price and the ability to provide goods in adequate quantities and on time.

104. The experts agreed that the new global context provided significant opportunities for competitive enterprises. However, they also noted that WTO rules on trade as well as the increasing concentration of big firms in the world market mean that those countries and firms that do not adopt modern business practices will not do well. In order to compete, domestic firms would require greater capital resources, sophisticated technology, including information technology, and entrepreneurial and management skills for competing in the more open but more sophisticated markets. Experts stressed the importance of regional integration and cooperation and South-South cooperation as first steps in developing competitiveness, but also pointed to the value of stronger enterprises establishing links with transnational firms.

105. The meeting considered a draft operational framework prepared by UNCTAD, which was subsequently revised on the basis of comments and suggestions made by the experts. The framework is envisioned as serving two functions: one suggesting a unifying approach for the activities of the United Nations system and other international agencies in the area of diversification so that their effectiveness is enhanced, and the other is outlining a strategy and a series of actions that can be undertaken by African countries to diversify their economies. It is anticipated that the framework will be discussed at the next meeting of the Administrative Committee on Coordination Steering Committee on Africa, scheduled for June 2000. An endorsement of the framework by the Committee is critical to mobilizing the support of the agencies, funds and programmes towards the goal of diversifying African economies.

106. From December 1998 to June 1999, UNIDO developed a portfolio of programmes valued at about $104 million for African countries. UNIDO has already contributed about $22.3 million of its programmable resources to launch the implementation of those programmes in 14 African countries. The programmes emphasized institutional capacity-building for the enhancement of industrial competitiveness and private sector development. New programmes were finalized at the end of 1999 to benefit four African countries, and programmes for 7 African countries are to be formulated in 2000. By the end of 2000 it is anticipated that integrated programmes will have been completed in 26 African countries, including 16 least developed countries.

107. A conference on industrial partnerships and investment in Africa (Dakar, 20 and 21 October 1999) was organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in cooperation with ECA, OAU, AfDB and the Government of Senegal. The conference was attended by a total of 493 participants, including African ministers, senior government officials, representatives from the private sector, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies and offices and the news media. One highlight of the conference was that an Austrian company finalized a joint venture agreement with a Senegalese company. This partnership will increase the capacity utilization of the Senegalese company which is run by women entrepreneurs, from 40 per cent to around 70 per cent.

J. Regional cooperation and integration

108. During the period under review, the activities of ECA in the field of economic cooperation and integration focused on building capacity to support the integration process through technical assistance and policy support to regional economic communities that serve as building blocks for the continent's integration. The analytical and policy studies undertaken by ECA on the policy and institutional constraints to Africa's

integration and on the lesson of experience from other regional groupings, including the North American Free Trade Agreement, MERCOSUR, the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, provide major support to efforts in this area. Through policy advocacy and facilitation of consensus-building around common positions, the objective is to help the regional economic communities to properly situate themselves with regard to their respective engagements and responsibilities in Africa's integration within a global setting. A major effort has been launched this year to systematically assess the continent's integration performance and to inform policy makers of the findings of those assessments as a basis for setting policy at the national and subregional levels.

109. ECA facilitated consensus-building around common African positions in the context of global trade and other relevant negotiations. For instance, in preparation for the Seattle WTO conference and the tenth session of UNCTAD, ECA organized a meeting for African trade ministers and experts that resulted in the drafting of a common African position. On an ongoing basis, the Commission, in cooperation with UNCTAD, provides training on analytical, communication and negotiation skills for African negotiators. The Commission is also engaged in facilitating policy consensus in key sectors such as transportation and civil aviation that are critical to the integration of the continent.

K. Increased resource mobilization

110. The question of resource mobilization has been discussed repeatedly since the launch of the Special Initiative. The meeting of its Technical Working Group (Addis Ababa, 5-7 March 1997) considered issues related to resource mobilization in some detail. At that meeting there was a broad agreement that the focus of the Special Initiative should be on managing existing resources more efficiently and on building national consensus on policy front. However, the announcement at the time of the launch of the estimate that the Special Initiative would require the mobilization of $25 billion over a 10-year period and the subsequent lack of substantial additional resources resulting from the Initiative have created major impediments to overcoming skepticism on its viability.

111. The resource mobilization question was raised again at the seventh meeting of the ACC Steering Committee on the Special Initiative, held in March 1998, in which it endorsed the establishment of a technical working group on resource mobilization. The Special Initiative secretariat was given the responsibility of servicing this group. The Working Group was asked to examine and recommend ways in which the Special Initiative could be transformed into a more relevant and vigorous instrument for programme coherence and aid effectiveness. The group was also to consider ways and means of increasing the Special Initiative's resources for technical cooperation activities in the light of declining official development assistance and low foreign direct investment to Africa.

112. The technical working group, composed of ECA, UNDP and the World Bank, met on 14 October 1998 and considered a number of issues to be considered further by a more representative group of agencies. Since then, the ACC Steering Committee on the Special Initiative at its eighth meeting, held in May 1999, CPC at its thirty-ninth session[5] and the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in July 1999 (agreed conclusions 1999/2) called for the development of an effective resource mobilization strategy for the Special Initiative (see annex I). In October 1999, the Special Initiative secretariat and the World Bank met and agreed that a brainstorming session should be organized to advance the process further. At that session, which was organized by the Special Initiative secretariat and held in New York on 25 February 2000, the secretariat circulated a discussion paper entitled "Resource mobilization strategies" and the records of the earlier meetings of the technical working group in order to stimulate discussion.

113. The ACC Steering Committee on the Special Initiative's second annual regional consultation meeting on the United Nations system organizations working in Africa is scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa on 26 and 27 June 2000 and will be chaired by the Executive Secretary of ECA. It is expected that the draft resource mobilization strategy note (see annex I), prepared by the Technical Working Group, will be made available at this meeting.

L. Other priority areas

1. Water

114. The Special Initiative's water cluster, consisting of UNEP, the World Bank and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) as the coordinating agencies, with UNDP, FAO, ECA, WHO, UNIDO, SADC, UNESCO, Habitat, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs as the cooperating agencies, has four clearly defined objectives, each with a designated group of lead agencies, namely: assuring sustainable use of and equitable access to water (UNEP, the World Bank and UNDP); household water security (UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank); freshwater assessments (WMO and UNESCO); and water for food production (FAO). While the Special Initiative framework has provided a platform for an important advocacy role, the agencies have developed several partnerships and engaged in a number of activities. The Water for African Cities Programme, focusing on access to fresh water, household water security and freshwater assessment within the framework of the Special Initiative, is a good example of effective coordination of the United Nations system's work in Africa. It involves several agencies, including UNEP, Habitat, the World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and UNESCO, with funding by the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, and the political support of participating countries, namely, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa and Zambia. This notwithstanding, the cluster as a whole has yet to make major and sustainable progress in terms of concrete programmes as was originally envisaged, despite the fact that an Inter-agency Working Group had identified four countries and one river basin for a concerted United Nations system action. The Working Group had identified the goals and determined strategic elements and criteria for assessing progress.

115. In order to revitalize and engender renewed commitment to the work of the water cluster by participating agencies, the Special Initiative secretariat held consultations with the coordinating agencies (UNEP, the World Bank and WMO) and ECA, and on that basis convened, under the chairmanship of the Executive Secretary of ECA, who is co-Chair of the Special Initiative Steering Committee, a technical working group meeting in The Hague on 20 March 2000 during the Second World Water Forum. The 10 agencies participating in the meeting decided that the Africa Water Vision embraced by OAU, ECA and AfDB and presented at the Forum would form the basis for collaboration within the Special Initiative framework, and further agreed to develop a forward-looking strategy based on a shared vision, creating new partnerships where there is clearly value added, rationalizing institutional arrangements and effective communication. The draft strategy was discussed in an inter-agency meeting held on 4 and 5 May 2000 in Nairobi. The strategy document is to be finalized and presented to the ACC Steering Committee at its regional consultation meeting, scheduled to take place in June 2000 in Addis Ababa, for consideration and endorsement.

2. Food security

116. Under the Special Initiative's Working Group on Food Security, FAO is responsible for issues related to water, food production, soil quality improvement, food security with special emphasis on women, land degradation and desertification control. Since December 1998, FAO has taken measures and encouraged links between the Special Initiative and the ACC Network on Rural Development and Food Security. These include: (a) setting up a focal point at FAO headquarters for each priority area; (b) including the priority areas in the agenda of the ACC thematic groups and in the work plans of FAO programmes at the country level; (c) the formulation of five technical documents on the four priority areas, to be used as a basis for discussion and action by the thematic groups or technical working groups and from which a work plan and a common strategic framework for action are expected to emerge. In countries where the pilot phase of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework is under implementation, the priorities of the Special Initiative are highlighted in the Committee's thematic groups, which have evolved into the Development Assistance Framework's theme groups.

117. The four priority areas have been further developed within the Special Programme for Food Security of FAO. The Programme includes national ownership, partnership with development partners, including donor countries and multilateral financial institutions, participation of farmers and other

stakeholders, emphasis on technical modernization, giving priority to small farmers, gender sensitivity and an integrated, multidisciplinary and phased approach.

118. In the area of water for food production, FAO has been involved in: (a) water sector policy and river basin management, including the Nile River Basin management policy; (b) water development and irrigation expansion — a water control component was prepared and implemented in 14 African countries; (c) irrigation equipment database — two workshops were held on low-cost irrigation technology and irrigation equipment transfer in Harare and in Ouagadougou respectively in 1998; (d) regional water resources assessment and river basin planning — projects have been set up relating to wetland development for eastern and southern Africa, lowland development in the sudano-sahelian zone and inland valley development; (e) water harvesting, including assessment of water-harvesting techniques in five western and central African countries, organization of a subregional workshop on water-harvesting techniques and their impact on the farming systems in western and central Africa (Niamey, October 1999) and identification and technical review of water management development and conservation in the Congo.

119. In the areas of soil quality improvement and indicators and land degradation and desertification control, ongoing and future activities are concentrated on four themes: theme 1, soil fertility and integrated plant nutrient management; theme 2, improved land productivity through soil and water conservation; theme 3, moisture conservation in rainfed agriculture; and theme 4, technologies for assessment and management of problem soils.

120. FAO has been involved in a number of seminars, workshops and expert consultations. In November 1999, the FAO/WMO roving seminar on the application of climatic data for drought preparedness and management of sustainable agriculture took place in Accra. Within the framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the roving seminar aimed at developing a national capacity for planning and implementing national action programmes to combat desertification and for applying climatic data to drought preparedness and to the management of sustainable agriculture. Also in November 1999, a regional workshop on land resources information system for food security in SADC countries was organized by the Subregional Office for Southern and East Africa of FAO in Zimbabwe. In July 1999 a subregional workshop on erosion-induced loss in soil productivity took place in Kumasi, Ghana.

121. The main activity carried out under the priority area of food security with special emphasis on women relates directly to training and empowerment of women in development. The focus of the activity is to address gender issues, particularly women's limited access to improved labour technologies, credit and marketing systems and the integration of women's concerns into the mainstream of agricultural development programmes. FAO designed a regional project on increasing rural women's food productivity through improved agricultural technology transfer and adoption in Africa. The major development objective of the project is to increase agricultural productivity through the identification, dissemination and institutionalization of agricultural technology transfer, which will benefit women farmers. The project will be operational before the end of 2000, and will involve relevant United Nations agencies and selected countries in the region.

122. Food aid from the World Food Programme (WFP) directly benefited some 19.8 million people in sub-Saharan Africa in 1999. Of those, 15 million were victims of emergencies, and 4.8 million received assistance through development programmes and activities. WFP deliveries to sub-Saharan Africa amounted to 1.1 million tons of food aid in 1999, with a total value of $531 million. In 1999 WFP approved 53 new operations for Africa which, together with additional commitments against already approved operations, amounted to $1.4 billion, constituting 53 per cent of all resources committed by WFP in 1999. WFP continues to strive for effective ways to address the special needs of women who, in Africa, are largely responsible for the food security of their families. WFP has progressively decentralized its management systems in its sub-Saharan Africa bureau. The process has now been completed with the opening of a sixth regional office, in Cameroon.

3. Environment

123. During the period between March 1999 and March 2000, one of the main technical assistance activities of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) focused on maritime legislation. In the first and

second quarters of 1999, advisory maritime legislation missions were fielded to Ghana and Nigeria. At the request of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, IMO held a subregional seminar in Cameroon from 31 January to 3 February 2000 for the benefit of 50 participants from Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Congo and Gabon. The objective was to update the common maritime law in force in those countries in the light of new developments. Advisory missions to Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Zambia for updating maritime legislation will be fielded in the first quarter of 2000.

124. The strategy of IMO on the prevention of marine pollution aims to provide countries with a maximum of assistance to help them to meet IMO requirements. To this end, one consultancy mission and four workshops were organized. Gabon benefited from three weeks of IMO expertise to strengthen its marine pollution legislation, a set of regulations was prepared and submitted to the Government of Gabon. IMO assisted in four workshops on oil spill contingency plans. Fifty nationals were trained on how to set up a national contingency plan and how to deal with events resulting in marine pollution.

125. IMO conducted two subregional seminars, in Mauritania and Mozambique. The main objective was the strengthening of flag State capabilities of sub-Saharan African countries by creating well-organized maritime administrations capable of implementing the relevant IMO conventions. Eleven African countries took part in the seminar in Mauritania and nine took part in the seminar in Mozambique.

126. IMO made progress in 1999 with the establishment of a regional pilot scheme in Africa. Two IMO regional offices have already been opened, in Nairobi and Accra, for the eastern and southern Africa and the western and central Africa (anglophone) subregions respectively.

127. IMO extended its port State control regime to include western and central Africa. The objective is to enhance safety and the protection of the marine environment. To establish a memorandum of understanding on port State control among western and central African countries, IMO held three preparatory meetings, in Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria, where the agreement was signed by 16 countries. It was agreed that the secretariat would be located in Nigeria and the information centre in Côte d'Ivoire. Under the memorandum of understanding, all parties will have to exercise full and continuous control in preventing the operation of substandard ships and ensuring that foreign merchant ships visiting its ports comply with IMO standards.

128. IMO, together with the International Hydrographic Organization, the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities and the International Association of Ports and Harbours, initiated a project to improve the safety of navigation on Lake Victoria. A joint mission of IMO and AfDB to Lake Victoria was undertaken in November 1999, and the report and recommendations of that mission are being considered for implementation.

129. A $4.5 million programme was launched by UNDP to help Niger's National Centre of the Environment coordinate, monitor and evaluate environmental management and protection activities, geared especially towards safeguarding the country's forestry and biodiversity resources. The project will provide equipment and training to government ministries, community organizations and non-governmental organizations. Niger needs particular attention because of the sharp degradation of its environment in recent years caused by population growth and harsh climatic conditions, including drought.

130. UNDP will provide $447,000 to support Liberia's Commission on the Environment to increase its capability to address the country's pressing environmental problems. The UNDP representative and the former Planning and Economics Affairs Minister launched the project in Monrovia to help Liberia develop an Agenda 21 action plan for sustainable development, to be implemented by 2005. It will also support the environmental protection intervention that is needed immediately following the country's recent emergence from a seven-year war.

4. South-South cooperation

131. South-South cooperation is a component of the Special Initiative, with ECA as the lead agency. Cooperating agencies include UNCTAD, the Office of the Special Coordinator, UNIDO, UNDP, UNESCO, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Although this component

has just been formally launched, activities have been ongoing.

132. UNDP co-organized, with the Governments of Malaysia and Japan, the first Asia-Africa Business Forum (Kuala Lumpur, October 1999). It was attended by participants from 24 African countries and 6 Asian countries, as well as representatives from the World Bank Group, UNIDO, UNCTAD, ITC and the Office of the Special Coordinator. The primary purpose of the meeting was to increase foreign direct investment flows from Asia to Africa. The Forum was able to generate 27 disclosed and signed memoranda of understanding, which, including others that were not disclosed, are estimated at over $100 million.

133. The Government of the Republic of Korea and the Office of the Special Coordinator convened the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the Seoul Forum on Asia-Africa cooperation on capacity-building for export promotion (New York, 22 March 2000). The Steering Committee is composed of the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Office of the Special Coordinator, UNDP and OAU, and serves as the guiding body for the effective implementation of the Seoul Forum's recommendations. A training programme has been prepared by the Office of the Special Coordinator and the Korean International Cooperation Agency that will specifically address the human resource component of capacity-building for export promotion in African countries. It is scheduled from 31 July to 13 August 2000 and will involve 20 African trade and investment policy makers selected by the Office of the Special Coordinator and the Government of the Republic of Korea.

134. The Governments of Japan and Malaysia, UNDP, the Office of the Special Coordinator and the Global Coalition for Africa are co-organizing the third Asia-Africa Forum, to be held in Kuala Lumpur from 23 to 25 May 2000. The objective is to enable African countries to achieve economic and social development through accelerated human and institutional capacity development as well as agricultural and private sector development. It will provide an opportunity for public policy makers, technical experts and private sector representatives of African and selected other countries to hold a dialogue on how to enhance African human and institutional capacity and its competitiveness in the global economy.

III. Implementation of the Special Initiative: issue of coordination

At the country level

135. At the country level, various mechanisms continue to be utilized in coordinating United Nations activities, including the common country assessment, the country cooperation framework, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the World Bank's country assessment strategy and, more recently, the comprehensive development framework and the poverty reduction strategy paper. Country team retreats on the Special Initiative in various countries have strengthened coordination.

136. In addition, the Special Initiative secretariat, working closely with the United Nations Development Group Office has developed guidelines specific to the Special Initiative for inclusion in the outline for the 1999 annual report of the United Nations resident coordinators.

137. Within the clusters, coordination at the country level has taken place in education, health, governance, information technology and population. In education, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF and other cooperating agencies have jointly organized consultative meetings and supported African Governments in some countries to launch five-year joint programmes for education for all. Those partnerships are broad-based, including not only the United Nations system and Governments, but also local communities and other bilateral and multilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations. The Special Initiative health component, coordinated by WHO and the World Bank, focuses on providing support to countries in the preparation and implementation of sector-wide health reform programmes at the country level so that high-quality, cost-effective and sustainable packages of basic health services can be made available. In the cluster on harnessing information technology for development, with the leadership of ECA, national information and communication infrastructure plans have been prepared and approved in 10 countries, and 12 countries are in the process of preparing them. Other countries will be included as they become interested in developing such policies, plans and strategies. UNFPA, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies (ECA, ILO, UNESCO, FAO, WHO and UNIFEM), has provided technical assistance to countries in a number of areas,

including reproductive health, gender and information, education and communication and socio-cultural research, through its technical assistance programme, which aims to build national capacity. In addition, a prototype population, environment, development and agriculture computer model has been developed and tested in some countries to raise the awareness of policy makers and planners on the relationship between women's reproductive health and household food security.

At the subregional and regional levels

138. Subregional meetings organized within the education and health clusters have facilitated the sharing of best practices in dealing with specific problem areas. In education, policy makers were able to exchange ideas on how to remove constraints on the development of basic education in Africa, including success factors in educating girls and financing teachers. As a result of these exchanges, in West Africa countries were able to introduce innovative modalities to address those issues, and there is some evidence of a reversal of the downward trend of gross enrolment rates in those countries, attributable partly to these policy changes. In the health cluster, three subregional intercountry meetings were held with the full participation of ministers of health and of finance and planning and were instrumental in reaching a common understanding on the concepts for health sector reform. Intercountry exchange visits have also led to the replication of best practices in some countries in the areas of controlling HIV/AIDS, community participation and collaboration between Governments and non-governmental organizations. The first African Development Forum, convened by ECA in October 1999 on the theme "The challenge to Africa of globalization and the information age", has spurred a number of other regional initiatives, such as SchoolNet Africa, an African distance learning programme, a telecentre network, a business-to-business network, an Alliance for African Business, an African Information Society Youth Network, as well national action groups in several countries. The Africa Governance Forum, now in its fourth year, has provided a platform for discussion of issues of common interest and exchange of best practices on governance issues. The third one, held in June 1999 in Bamako, focused on conflict management and sustainable development.

139. As reported to CPC at its thirty-ninth session (E/AC.51/1999/6, paras. 117 and 118), the first annual regional coordination meeting of the United Nations system in Africa (Nairobi, March 1999), chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, agreed that the Special Initiative could provisionally constitute an appropriate coordinating mechanism for the work of the United Nations system in Africa. The meeting also requested that the co-Chairs of the ACC Steering Committee on the Special Initiative, the UNDP Administrator and the ECA Executive Secretary submit a report on the proposed expanded role of the Special Initiative to the Deputy Secretary-General within three months of that meeting.

140. The co-Chairs prepared a report on how the Special Initiative could assume this expanded coordination role, which was circulated at the eighth meeting of the Special Initiative Steering Committee, held in May 1999, and submitted to the Deputy Secretary-General in June 1999. The Deputy Secretary-General accepted the report and submitted, for endorsement by ACC at its second regular session of 1999, held on 29 and 30 October, a set of recommendations aimed at harmonizing and simplifying existing arrangements of the work of the United Nations system in Africa. In submitting those recommendations, the Deputy Secretary-General noted that the regional meeting had reviewed existing inter-agency mechanisms and had sought to devise arrangements that would enhance the coherence of the United Nations system's activities without creating additional structures for coordination.

141. The Secretary-General noted that the United Nations system's work in Africa had been a long-standing item on the ACC agenda. He recalled that his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustained developed in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318) had raised the issue of the multitude of international initiatives in Africa and that this had been one of the main issues addressed in the above-mentioned first annual regional coordination meeting. ACC welcomed the work that was under way and endorsed the broad thrust of the recommendations before it, which aimed to promote more collaborative actions, reinforce synergies, avoid duplication and overlap and generally bring about greater coherence in the work of the United Nations system in Africa, with the Special Initiative Steering Committee providing a common framework for overseeing the overall effort. It

was agreed that in view of the comments made, some adjustments would be made in the formulation of specific recommendations in consultation with the concerned agencies.

142. The second annual regional consultation meeting of the ACC Steering Committee on the Special Initiative is scheduled for 26 and 27 June 2000 in Addis Ababa. This meeting will take stock of the United Nations system's work in Africa, facilitate informal sharing on Special Initiative cluster activities through cluster reporting and identify a set of monitorable indicators and benchmarks on the basis of which systematic cluster-level reporting could be done on progress towards enhanced system-wide collaboration and synergies at the country level.

IV. Conclusion

143. The present report clearly shows that further significant progress has been achieved in the implementation of a number of Special Initiative priority programmes. These are core programmes relating to good governance, education, health, information technology, population and gender. Some other programmes, including those dealing with poverty reduction through employment and informal sector development, market access and trade opportunities, water, food security, environment and South-South cooperation, have shown some steady progress. There are clear signs that all programmes are likely to get further impetus in the coming years.

144. CPC has repeatedly stressed the need for wider coverage of countries by the Special Initiative. While efforts are being made in this direction with the launching of new programmes, including, for example, programmes on economic diversification, regional cooperation and integration, it should be noted that programmes of the Special Initiative are designed to be demand-driven. The countries themselves have to demonstrate their ownership of the various programmes by taking initiative in effort to attain their development goals.

145. A critical issue that impedes the implementation of the Special Initiative is the problem of agencies providing resources from their core budgets in support of Special Initiative activities. This is an inherent deficiency that would be difficult to overcome very satisfactorily. While it was announced at the launching of the Special Initiative in March 1996 that the Initiative would mobilize $25 billion over a period of 10 years, it was stressed at the same time that this would be from the existing resources of the United Nations system. The comparative advantage of the Special Initiative was not in the additional resources it could generate for Africa, but rather in the synergy it was expected to create among the organizations of the United Nations system working in Africa and in the enhanced coordination among those organizations that could result in a more effective utilization of scarce resources to eliminate overlap and duplication. The combined effect of synergy and enhanced coordination would encourage donor countries and organizations to inject new resources where and when they were actually needed.

146. As indicated in paragraph 112 above, a resource mobilization strategy (see annex I) has been developed that would be made available to the ACC Steering Committee on the Special Initiative at the second annual regional consultation meeting of the United Nations system organizations working in Africa, scheduled for 26 and 27 June 2000 in Addis Ababa. Improvements have been recorded on coordination at the country, subregional and regional levels. In the coming years, what is called for is to build on the partnerships and collaboration that have been evolving.

147. CPC made a number of recommendations at its thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions. Actions taken by the organizations of the United Nations system in response to those recommendations and achievements are provided in annex II. A lot remains to be done to fully implement the recommendations of the Committee.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/54/16), para. 596.

[2] Ibid., paras. 587-596.

[3] There are three different sub-sets of activities: (a) basic education and livelihood opportunities for illiterate and semi-literate young adults, which aims to identify good practices in programme design and implementation and to develop local capacity to monitor and evaluate basic adult education programmes – and when possible, in tandem with designing new programmes; (b) country-specific activities aimed at building ministry capacity to evaluate and monitor literacy programmes and at

planning new strategies for adult literacy education/non-formal education in Gambia, Mozambique, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad and Guinea; and (c) a working document, entitled "Engaging with the adults", aimed at supporting adult basic education is being drafted in the context of the Special Initiative and supported under the Norwegian Education Trust Fund.

[4] *Human Development Report 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.99.III.B.43).

[5] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/54/16), para. 589.

Annex I

Draft resource mobilization strategy note

Introduction

1. In the common cause to make a tangible difference and ensure that the support provided to Africa's development efforts have an increasingly positive impact, particularly on the poor, the need for an uncommon opportunity was recognized in the early 1990s. This was, specifically, the need to help sustain the improvement in the policy environment and the encouraging performance of many African countries, including an apparent shift in an increasing number of countries towards democratic governance. The framework of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa provided that opportunity in the context of United Nations reform and the agreement of agency heads to hold themselves mutually accountable for achieving results under the Special Initiative. Unfortunately, since the Special Initiative was launched, in March 1996, a number of factors have impeded substantial progress in the implementation of its programme activities. These included: (a) a problem of ownership owing to poor consultations with African Governments and other development partners in conceptualizing and launching the Initiative; (b) the perception that the $25 billion estimated requirement for priority programmes reflected additional resources, whereas, in fact, it was expected to come largely through improved efficiency in the use of existing resources; (c) the perception that the indicated "buy-in" of the Special Initiative idea by the United Nations system itself has not been translated into commitments and sustained by most agencies; (d) questions about the viability of the structure for its implementation and the funding sources to support it; and (e) failure to articulate its added value.

2. While the Special Initiative has made some headway in addressing positively the question of ownership and legitimacy (through intergovernmental mandates and intensive consultation with Governments) and has demonstrated its viability as a framework for implementation through the clustering of Africa's priorities in which agencies hold each other accountable, it has yet to articulate a common message, mobilize significant resources for programme activities and correct the perception about the lack of commitment and sustained interest by most of the United Nations system agencies.

3. As concluded in the two previous meetings of the Technical Working Group (5-7 March 1997 and 14 October 1998), a pragmatic resource mobilization strategy for Africa must take account of the aid climate characterized not only by the global decline in official development assistance flows but also by an increasing shift from the discourse on additional resources to aid effectiveness. The mobilization of new resources has to be based on the reallocation of undisbursed funds and/or country-driven coherent sectoral or thematic programmes. This approach to resource mobilization, articulated in a message of the Special Initiative, should be disseminated through an effective communication strategy.

The common message: the value added of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa

4. The value added of the Special Initiative is its viability as a framework for collaborative efforts, enhanced coherence, efficiency in the use of available resources and reduction in the transaction costs of the United Nations system's work in Africa through, for example, common or streamlined procedures, joint programming, common implementation strategy and common reporting. While the Bretton Woods institutions are not part of the resident coordinator system, their inclusion in and commitment to the Special Initiative framework provide a broader coverage for coordination within the United Nations system. In fact, most of the achievements in programme implementation to-date, for example in the education and health clusters, have been as a result of this broader reach.

Resource mobilization strategy

5. The Special Initiative, since its launch, has been instrumental in forging partnerships among agencies in the clusters on education, health, information technology and governance. Lessons learned from the

experiences of these clusters point to a resource mobilization strategy that has three areas of focus:

(a) Country focus. By demonstrating national ownership and leadership; by reflecting consensus arrived at through consultations among a wide selection of stakeholders, involving external partners in the preparation of sectoral investment programmes where applicable for presentation to donor coordination meetings, such as consultative groups, round tables and in sectoral consultations in the search for greater access to resource flows; through strong advocacy for the allocation of national budgets and international aid resources, including trust funds and technical assistance grants to overcome policy and capacity impediments; and through the fully mobilized support of the resident coordinator system through programming mechanisms such as the common country assessment, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the country development framework, where such mechanisms are in place;

(b) Cluster focus. By reflecting specific sector goals in keeping with major United Nations conference recommendations, showing clear evidence of agreements reached among United Nations coordinating and cooperating agencies on the basis of cluster consultations; by ensuring consistency of cluster activities with national policies, strategies and programmes and the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s; by maximizing the benefits from a division of labour according to mandates in collaborative efforts by agencies; and by determining sector-specific resource requirements and setting out criteria for benchmarking to assess progress in attaining goals for both donors and beneficiaries and leveraging this for resource mobilization;

(c) Intercountry focus. By facilitating the exchange of information on best practices in addressing common policy impediments and assisting in replicating the outcomes in programmable approaches in the priority areas of the Special Initiative. Special attention is given to cross-border issues, such as in the areas of health, natural resources and watershed management, including river basins, disseminating information on these widely, and managing the information for the purpose of mobilizing resources.

6. The key elements of the strategy are as follows:

- Rationalizing existing programmes and resources at the country level;
- Reprogramming of allocated resources to priority areas of greater absorption;
- Deepening dialogue on aid effectiveness among African policy makers and their external partners through international, regional and national forums and galvanizing interest on the part of African countries to lead the process;
- Using aid effectiveness as a means of stemming the decline in official development assistance and, through concerted advocacy for Africa, reverse the trend;
- Securing greater support and partnership for Africa through improved coordination and leveraging of available resources and programmatic linkages among Special Initiative partners, bilateral and multilateral sponsors of other African initiatives (the European Union, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development) and the private sector.

Implementation

7. The resource mobilization strategy would be implemented primarily by the clusters of the priority areas under the leadership of the coordinating agencies with the full participation of the United Nations resident coordinators and country teams within the Special Initiative framework, with the support of the secretariat. The ACC Steering Committee on the Special Initiative will provide guidance and oversight. The specific actions expected from the main actors, namely, the ACC Steering Committee, the cluster coordinating agencies and the Special Initiative secretariat, include the following:

(a) The ACC Steering Committee, under the leadership of the co-chairs, should:

- Review the role of the Special Initiative in the light of recent developments and give it new direction and impetus;

- Agree on a common message and a communication strategy for the Special Initiative;
- Obtain a commitment from agency executive heads to allocate part of their core budgets for Special Initiative activities and to strengthen the capacity of the Special Initiative secretariat in order that it may perform at the minimum its basic functions;
- Give direction to the coordinating agencies to assume responsibility for resource mobilization at the cluster level;
- Guide agencies in general and coordinating agencies in particular on the operationalization of the decision of ACC to use the Special Initiative as the mechanism of coordination at the regional level;

(b) The clusters. The coordinating agencies and cooperating agencies should:

- Determine resource requirements for cluster-specific programmes with national ownership and jointly determine the mechanisms for mobilization of such resources, including consultative groups, round tables and sectoral investment programmes as appropriate;
- Ensure that the programmes have benefited from adequate consultations with national Governments and other stakeholders, as well as the resident coordinator system at the country level;
- Agree on a division of labour and define benchmarks to measure progress and make effective use of the Technical Working Groups;
- Agree on a common reporting format and channel information and joint reports to the Special Initiative secretariat on progress made for transmission to the Steering Committee as well as for the preparation of intergovernmental reports;
- Support information and communication officers of coordinating agencies in establishing an effective network for information collection, dissemination and reporting through the Special Initiative secretariat, as well as facilitate the exchange of information with the various bilateral initiatives to avoid duplication and enhance cooperation with non-United Nations system initiatives;

(c) The Special Initiative secretariat should:

- Disseminate to all concerned the approved resource mobilization strategy note and backstop the resource mobilization activities of the clusters;
- Convene regularly consultation sessions for information and communication officers of coordinating agencies; promote inter-agency electronic interchange, dialogue and linkages of web sites and other means of information exchange; and disseminate common messages on Special Initiative activities to all stakeholders;
- Prepare, in consultation with the United Nations agencies concerned, the requisite reports to the ACC Steering Committee on the Special Initiative;
- Collect and disseminate information on best practices about aid effectiveness;
- Prepare, in consultation with the agencies concerned, the requisite reports to the inter-agency and intergovernmental bodies, namely, the ACC Steering Committee, CPC, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly;
- Broaden the scope of support of the resident coordinator system to ensure complementarity of the Special Initiative and tools such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the country development framework at the country and regional levels; and
- Collect and disseminate information on United Nations and non-United Nations initiatives on Africa and develop an appropriate framework for information sharing among such initiatives in order to minimize duplication of efforts and waste of resources.

Annex II

Recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions

A. Recommendations of the Committee at its thirty-eighth session,[a] suggested follow-up and actions taken

Recommendations	*Suggested actions*	*Organizations*	*Achievements*
1. The Committee considered that the results achieved so far were interesting and constituted some progress compared with the previous situation. They were nonetheless insufficient regarding the number of countries and the limited areas covered so far.	• Organize a technical working group and accelerate the implementation of education action plans for the 16 low primary enrolment countries and report on concrete results.	World Bank/ UNESCO/ UNICEF	The matrix of activities in education in the 16 low enrolment countries has been agreed on by the agencies; a joint memorandum has been sent to country offices and joint reports have been submitted to ACC and CPC. Education sector development programmes have been approved in two countries; they will be ready by June 2000 in five countries. Subregional activities have been carried out to provide training and exchange experiences in girls' education and adult literacy, and support has been provided for the development of education sector development programmes.
	• Monitor implementation of follow-up activities to the Africa Governance Forums in the 24 participating countries and report on results.	UNDP/ECA	In governance, 42 countries and 48 NGOs have participated in the three Africa Governance Forums, the latest held in June 1999. An inventory of the governance programme to enhance the capacity of the Governments to coordinate activities has been completed and is being updated in 12 countries; data are being collected in 12 others.
	• Organize a technical working group and accelerate the formulation and implementation of action plans for health sector reform for better health services in 15 countries.	WHO/World Bank/UNICEF/ UNDP	At the third intercountry meeting, held in Cotonou (July 1999), 46 countries took part in the policy dialogue and reached consensus on what constitutes health sector reforms. Agreement was reached to use sector-wide approaches as the modality of support to health sector reform. Country action plans are to be prepared and the development of a tool for monitoring and evaluating health sector reforms by countries is to be initiated.

Recommendations	*Suggested actions*	*Organizations*	*Achievements*
	• Monitor and report on activities in other priority areas and in as many countries as possible:	ECA/World Bank/UNESCO/ UNIDO/UNDP/ resident coordinator	In information technology, implementation is being carried out within the African Information Society at the national, subregional and regional levels. Collaboration has been strengthened between the United Nations and other organizations through the Partnership for Information and Communication Technologies in Africa. A series of subregional networks have been initiated, and 12 countries have developed national information action plans; 10 more are in process. Progress in other clusters, i.e., population, water, and reduction of poverty through the informal sector, have been followed up and reported on in the body of the report.
	– Check with the resident representatives on the implementation of Special Initiative components of their compact;	Special Initiative/ UNDP/resident coordinator	Owing to the lack of staff at the Special Initiative secretariat, effective follow-up with agencies and at the country level has not been possible. However, the secretariat has managed to develop and submit to the United Nations Development Group Office specific guidelines on reporting for inclusion in the annual report of the resident coordinators for 1999.
	– Check with the resident representative/resident coordinator on activities undertaken in the framework of the implementation of their Special Initiative retreat action plans (Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Togo);	UNSIA/UNDP/ resident coordinator	
	– Get continuous up-to-date information on cluster activities;	Special Initiative/ UNDP/resident coordinator	Information on cluster activities has been collected in preparation for the eighth meeting of the ACC Steering Committee as well as for this report and the preparation of Technical Working Group meetings in a few clusters.
	• Prepare a matrix of ongoing Special Initiative-related activities at the country level;	Special Initiative/ resident coordinator/ UNDP	

Recommendations	*Suggested actions*	*Organizations*	*Achievements*
	• Organize Special Initiative country retreats in other countries.	Special Initiative/ resident coordinators/ UNDP	Staffing constraints in the Special Initiative secretariat did not allow for the accomplishment of this in 1999. However one retreat is planned to take place in Cameroon in May 2000.
2. ACC should be requested to intensify efforts to mobilize fully the analytical capacities and capabilities of the United Nations system at the service of the Special Initiative, in order to achieve coverage of the maximum number of countries and areas of activity.	• Draw the attention of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and the two Chairmen of the ACC Steering Committee to this recommendation.	Special Initiative/Office of the Special Coordinator	The Special Initiative secretariat remains understaffed. A positive indication for the secondment of staff has been received from one agency, but action on this is still pending. A strategy to take the Special Initiative to the country level, prepared by the Special Initiative secretariat, has yet to be implemented. The Office of the Special Coordinator has brought to the attention of the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Assistant Secretary-General overseeing ACC matters the need for the United Nations system to intensify its efforts and to mobilize the analytical capacities and capabilities at the service of the Special Initiative.
3. The different lead agencies should be called upon, under the coordination of the ACC Steering Committee, to develop in their respective areas a common strategic framework for action that analyses and highlights problems, sets goals, determines the respective contributions of organizations, indicates necessary resources and sets reference points, including performance indicators.	• Formulation and implementation of common strategic frameworks for action in the different clusters, with emphasis on contents, in terms of the elements mentioned by the Committee.	Coordinating agencies	Agreement on a common approach has been reached in the clusters of education, health, information technology, water, resource mobilization, reduction of poverty through the informal sector, and trade access and economic diversification. Performance indicators have yet to be developed.
	• Include in terms of reference of the upcoming Technical Working Group (trade, poverty, education, health, water, resource mobilization) where appropriate a review, update or formulation of a common strategic framework for action.	Coordinating agencies	Technical working group meetings have taken place in education, reduction of poverty through the informal sector, health, water, resource mobilization and trade access and diversification.
	• Review the status of preparation and implementation of the common strategic frameworks	Office of the Special Coordinator/ Special Initiative	

Recommendations	*Suggested actions*	*Organizations*	*Achievements*
4. Rapid preparation of programmes in the two areas of regional cooperation and integration and economic diversification	• Identification of cooperating agencies that constitute the clusters.	Office of the Special Coordinator/ Special Initiative	ECA devotes the work programme of one of its five substantive divisions to regional cooperation and integration. As part of the routine work programme of the ECA regional cooperation and integration division, it undertakes policy and analytical studies on regional and integration issues and provides policy and technical assistance to regional economic communities and member States on enhancing Africa's integration agenda and on improving its competitiveness as a global trading partner. ECA has launched a major project to systematically assess progress towards Africa's integration. With respect to trade access, UNCTAD has reported that the Joint Integrated Programme of ITC/UNCTAD/WTO has mobilized $7 million of the target $10 million. Needs assessments were prepared in 17 African countries. Technical Working Group meetings were held in November 1999 and January 2000. An operational framework for action on diversification of African economies has been prepared by UNCTAD in consultation with the Office of the Special Coordinator.
	• Organization of a technical working group to work out formulation and implementation arrangements.	Coordinating agencies	
	• Review of the effectiveness of the resource mobilization strategy.	Office of the Special Coordinator/ Special Initiative	
5. Strengthen the Special Initiative secretariat by:	• Agreement on working arrangements.	Office of the Special Coordinator/ Special Initiative	The Office of the Special Coordinator and the Special Initiative had agreed on a joint work programme and have been working very closely in the past year. However, the strengthening of the Special Initiative secretariat, as requested by CPC, has yet to take place. Proposals for streamlining the Special Initiative's work programme and rationalizing the associated funding arrangements are under consideration by the co-Chairs of the Special Initiative secretariat.
(a) Tightening its working relationship with the Office of the Special Coordinator;	• Identification of areas of joint activities.	Office of the Special Coordinator/ Special Initiative	
	• Preparation and implementation of a joint work programme.	Office of the Special Coordinator/ Special Initiative	As for the Office of the Special Coordinator, its capacity to collaborate fully with the Special Initiative has been reduced as a result of the termination by UNDP of its financial support to the Office.
	• Joint preparation of appropriate reports.	Office of the Special Coordinator/ Special Initiative	

Recommendations	*Suggested actions*	*Organizations*	*Achievements*
	• Update list of focal points.	Office of the Special Coordinator/ Special Initiative	
(b) Tightening its working relationship with the substantive division of ECA;	• Through the two Chairmen, associate ECA with technical working group meetings and UNDP cluster arrangements.	Special Initiative	The Special Initiative and the Office of the Special Coordinator have worked jointly in the preparation of intergovernmental reports (CPC, Economic and Social Council and General Assembly) as well as in organizing technical working group meetings in the areas of reduction of poverty through the informal sector and economic diversification.
(c) Tightening its working relationship with the focal points of organizations and agencies, including the Inter-Agency Task Force on Africa's Economic Recovery and Development;	• Update the list of focal points.	Special Initiative	Agency focal points have been designated.
	• Organize technical working groups.	Special Initiative/ agency focal points	
	• Elaborate a strategy for rationalization.	Special Initiative/ agency focal points	ECA houses one wing of the Special Initiative secretariat and, as such, draws on the substantive inputs of the ECA divisions in preparing inputs to inter-agency reports on the Special Initiative.
	• Strengthen information flow.	Special Initiative/ agency focal points	List is updated periodically. Technical working group meetings have been organized in several clusters as indicated in No. 3 above.
(d) Allocating to it the necessary resources.	• Explore cost-sharing arrangements within the United Nations.	Office of the Special Coordinator/ Special Initiative/ECA	UNDP terminated its support to the Office of the Special Coordinator for its work related to linkages between the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the Special Initiative, and also the implementation of the Special Initiative by the Office of the Special Coordinator.

Recommendations	*Suggested actions*	*Organizations*	*Achievements*
6. In the area of coordination, efforts should be intensified in particular as regards:	Prepare periodic briefs and recommendations for the Secretary-General and the Executive Committees.	Office of the Special Coordinator/ Special Initiative/ECA	Following the first regional consultation meeting on 5 March 1999, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, and the decision to use the Special Initiative as a mechanism for the coordination of the work of the United Nations in Africa, the Co-Chairs of the ACC Steering Committee submitted a report on the expanded role of the Special Initiative. On that basis, the ACC endorsed that decision at its second session of 1999, held on 29 and 30 October.
(a) The orientation and advocacy role of the Secretary-General, the follow-up and catalytic role of the Office of the Special Coordinator and the operational role of UNDP and ECA;	Implementation of a common strategic framework for individual priorities. Resident coordinators and United Nations country teams and Governments to promote country strategy notes, common country assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.	Coordinating agencies/clusters Resident coordinators/ UNDP/United Nations Development Group	The role of the Secretary-General has been prominently raised by the 1998 report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318) and the subsequent debate on Africa that has taken place in the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. As for the Office of the Special Coordinator, its follow-up and catalytic role has been enhanced by its substantive support not only to the Secretary-General's office but also to the above-mentioned organs.
(b) Further coordination measures aimed at establishing a dynamic and common framework of action at the field level.			The second annual regional consultative meeting of the ACC Steering Committee on Africa will take place on 26 and 27 June 2000 at ECA headquarters in Addis Ababa. The meeting will be chaired by the ECA Executive Secretary. The Special Initiative secretariat has initiated contact with the UNAIDS office in Geneva to identify areas of collaboration.

[a] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third session, Supplement No. 16* (A/54/16).

B. Recommendations of the Committee at its thirty-ninth session,[b] and actions taken

Recommendations	*Organizations*	*Achievements*
1. CPC requested that a resource mobilization strategy together with the concrete action plan be submitted to the Committee for consideration at its fortieth session in 2000.	Coordinating agencies/Special Initiative	A resource mobilization brainstorming session was organized in New York and a strategy including action plans by various actors has been prepared.
2. While welcoming the emphasis on improving Africa's trade access and opportunities, the Committee requested that activities also be implemented on opportunities to access markets and that such activities be reflected in the next progress report.	Coordinating agencies	UNCTAD as the coordinating agency for this cluster has carried out a number of activities to support the efforts of African countries in the WTO and African, Caribbean and Pacific States/European Union negotiations. Studies and training workshops have been conducted. (See also part A above.) In preparation for the Third Ministerial Conference of WTO and UNCTAD, ECA organized a meeting where experts from African States drafted an African position paper which was later adopted by the Conference of African Ministers of Trade, held in Algiers on 9 and 10 September 1999.
3. The Committee noted the matrix prepared by the Secretariat in follow-up to and implementation of its recommendations and requested that the matrix be improved by adding a fourth column indicating action taken and that it be submitted to it together with future progress reports.	Office of the Special Coordinator/Special Initiative	The matrices in the present annex have been prepared in response to this recommendation.
4. The Committee took note with appreciation of the closer collaboration between the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, the Economic Commission for Africa and the secretariat of the Special Initiative and requested those entities to work closely on the harmonization of the various initiatives on Africa, especially on enhancing the linkages and common elements among the Special Initiative, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the Cairo Agenda for Action for relaunching Africa's economic and social development and the Tokyo Agenda for Action, on the one hand, and the other multilateral and bilateral initiatives on the other.	Office of the Special Coordinator/Special Initiative	The Special Initiative and the Office of the Special Coordinator continue to work together in a number of areas. The ECA has already started developing a database of the various initiatives on Africa with the view to identify common areas of interest for collaboration. The Office of the Special Coordinator has carried out a number of activities in areas of common interest to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the Special Initiative and the Tokyo Agenda. More specifically, the Office of the Special Coordinator has held discussions with ECA and the Special Initiative on further enhancing collaboration between themselves. With the support of the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of the Special Coordinator has obtained agreement from various United Nations entities that they designate focal points on Africa to work closely with the Office of the Special Coordinator. The first meeting of the focal points will take place this year.

Recommendations	*Organizations*	*Achievements*
5. The Committee called upon the coordinating agencies of the various clusters of the Special Initiative to be represented at the highest appropriate level at its future meetings on the Special Initiative in order to assist the Committee in its deliberations.	Office of the Special Coordinator/Special Initiative Secretariat	Invitations to attend the CPC meeting are being extended to the coordinating agencies.
6. The Committee recommended the acceleration of the Special Initiative by extending support to as many countries or regions as possible that may require funding in those activities that have a direct impact at the field level.	Coordinating agencies of Special Initiative clusters	It is expected that the resource mobilization strategy, which focuses on the work of the clusters, will generate resources for well-formulated programmes at the country level.
7. The Committee requested that its comments be reported to the Economic and Social Council at its coordination segment on Africa, to be held at Geneva in July 1999.	Chairman of CPC	The report was submitted and considered at the Council's substantive session of 1999. At the coordination and substantive sessions of the Council in July 1999, the Chairman of CPC presented the conclusion and recommendations of CPC at its thirty-ninth session on the Special Initiative.
8. The Committee requested that a progress report on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, including measures taken in response to the foregoing recommendations of the Committee, be submitted to it for consideration at its fortieth session in 2000.	Office of the Special Coordinator	The report to which this is annexed is prepared pursuant to this recommendation.

[b] Ibid., *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/54/16).